

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STOCKH 01440 121135Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----096767 121137Z /14
O 121112Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3520

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 1440

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SW, IN
SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT SALES TO INDIA

REF: STATE 92067 AND PREVIOUS

1. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO JUDGE FROM STOCKHOLM, REFTEL PLUS REPORTING FROM NEW DELHI GIVE THE GROWING IMPRESSION THAT THE INDIANS WILL CHOOSE THE JAGUAR. OUR SWEDISH CONTACTS DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THIS, BUT THEY SEEM LESS SURE OF THE SALE THAN THEY DID TWO WEEKS AGO. OUR CONTACTS HAVE NOT BEEN PUSHING US AT THE EMBASSY TO DO ANYTHING FURTHER, ALTHOUGH THIS COULD WELL BE BECAUSE SWEDISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON IS CARRYING THE BALL (WE UNDERSTAND WACHTMEISTER WAS SEEING BENSON, AND PERHAPS WHAT HE SAID WILL CAST NEW LIGHT ON CURRENT SWEDISH VIEW OF THE URGENCY OF THE MATTER).

2. OUR THOUGHT NOW IS SIMPLY THAT IF THE VIGGEN IS KNOCKED OUT OF THE RACE, WE WISH IT TO BE THE INDIANS WHO KNOCK IT OUT RATHER THAN THE USG. ADMITTEDLY, IF THE SWEDES ARE STILL PRESSING HARD FOR AN EARLY DECISION--ESPECIALLY IF WE HAVE COMMITTED OURSELVES TO AN ANSWER BY A CERTAIN DATE, IN AN EFFORT TO BE

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HELPFUL--IT MAY BE HARD TO POSTPONE AN ANSWER. SHOULD THE ANSWER BE YES, WE WOULD OF COURSE LIKE IT TO BE GIVEN AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE. SINCE ALL WE KNOW INDICATES THAT THE ANSWER WILL PROBABLY BE NO, WE WONDER IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO SIT ON THAT NEGATIVE ANSWER UNTIL THERE IS MORE DEFINITE WORD FROM NEW DELHI.

3. IN SUGGESTING A POSSIBLE DELAY, THE EMBASSY IS WELL AWARE THAT THIS GOES AGAINST OUR PREVIOUS PLEAS (IN THE VIGGEN AND STANSAAB ATC CASES AS WELL AS OTHERS) FOR EARLY ANSWERS. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT DELAY BY THE USG GOES AGAINST URGING FOR A SPEEDY ANSWER BY THE GOS, AND MIGHT EVEN CONTRIBUTE TO A DECISION AGAINST THE VIGGEN BY THE INDIANS. NEVERTHELESS, IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD AT LEAST CONSIDER POSTPONING A NEGATIVE ANSWER UNTIL EVENTS ELSEWHERE HAVE TAKEN THE BURDEN OF KILLING THIS SALE OFF THE US BACK.

4. WE EMPHASIZE THAT WE MOST CERTAINLY DEFER TO THE DEPARTMENT'S JUDGMENT IN THIS MATTER AND INSERT THIS PARTICULAR LINE OF THOUGHT ONLY IN CASE IT HAS NOT BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THERE.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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